



## UPDATES FROM USDA ON THE NEW MEAL PATTERNS 5/10/12

Attached are four items from USDA related to implementation of the new school meal patterns and nutrition standards beginning July 1, 2012.

**There is some information in these memos that is new or different from the information that was presented at regional meetings in March and April. Please direct any questions that you have to your regional consultant.**

### **I. Grain Requirements for the School Lunch and School Breakfast Program**

Refer to attached memo SP 30-2012.

In School Year 2012-2013 only, battered and/or breaded products offered will not need to be counted toward the maximum weekly grain requirements in the meal pattern, but **may** be counted if desired.

Beginning July 1, 2013 (School Year 2013-2014), all grains which are part of battered and/or breaded products offered **must** be counted towards the weekly grain requirement. This is consistent with the message provided at the regional meetings.

### **II. Revised version of “Questions and Answers on the Final Rule, “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs”**

USDA has stated they will continue to print all Questions and Answers when they are updated, but designate new questions by printing them in *italics*. When reviewing Questions and Answers from USDA, be sure to note the dates.

Notable additions in these Questions and Answers:

- The juice limit will apply weekly to support menu planning flexibility. No more than half of the weekly offering for the fruit component or the vegetable component may be in the form of full-strength juice.
- Clarification is provided for calculating minimum and maximum servings of grains and meats when multiple entrees providing both components are offered in the same line.

- Fruits and vegetables are two separate components. However, to minimize food waste, under Offer versus Serve (OVS), USDA will now allow the student to select ¼ cup of fruits and ¼ cup vegetables to meet the reimbursable meal requirement of the ½ cup fruits or vegetables. The combined ½ cup of fruit and vegetable would count as one component, not two. For fruits and vegetables to count as two components, the student would have to select at least a ½ cup of either fruit or vegetable and then the full serving size of the second fruit or vegetable.
- At the elementary and middle schools, SFAs do not have the option to allow the students to decline only one of the five components offered. All students must be allowed to decline 2 components if desired, but just as under current policy, smaller amounts of declined items may be served.

### **III. Short and Long Week Calculations of Meal Component Adjustments.**

Since the dietary specifications are based on average daily amounts, these are unaffected by varying week lengths (average over length of week, whether consisting of 3 to 7 days)

Due to size of weekly vegetable subgroup requirements, the 20% adjustment is not practical. Therefore, adjustments are primarily made to the “Additional Vegetable” category only- which in turn allows increased or decreased offering amounts of any of the subgroups to meet this requirement.

### **IV. Interim Final Rule on Certification of Compliance**

This rule was published in the Federal Register on April 27, 2012 and outlines School Food Authority (SFA) and State Agency responsibilities for the certification to begin receiving the additional six cents per lunch reimbursement provided in the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. SFAs must apply for certification to receive the six cents. More training and specific forms are expected to be available in June.